

Alvethorpe  
Jenkintown, Penna.

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Pennsylvania

HISTORICAL AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
Joseph P. Sims, District Officer  
2003 Architects Building, Philadelphia, Pa.

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ALVETHORPE  
Jenkintown, Penna.

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Owner - Built for Joshua Francis Fisher, - sold 1937  
by Dr. H. M. Fisher to Mr. Lessing Rosenwald.

Date - 1850 - 60.

Architect - John Notman

Builder - Unknown

Present Condition - Demolished 1937

Number of Stories - Three full stories and tower.

Materials of Construction - Walls stucco with dressed stone coins, color pinkish, with coins a little more buff. Flat hipped roofs of tin. Porches of wood, considerable handsome iron walk on circular "covered way" (see photograph) and first floor balcony on front (not shown). Round-headed entrance door surrounded by round painted glass panels. Large round-headed window on stair landing had border panels painted with lilac grapes and green leaves, central panels had delicate over all etched pattern (no color). Interior photo of room with columns is white drawing room or ball room, looking into green drawing room. Columns are marbleized, salmon-orange cornices are plaster. Library had bookcases with arched tops over doorways and over mirror over mantel, and rope mould around glass doors. Dining room octagonal with plaster cornices. All rooms had marble mantels. Ceilings very high-about 19 feet on first floor - 14 feet on second floor - Second floor had six large master bed rooms. Library bookcases and three mantels preserved at "Awbury" where Mrs. Fisher now lives, - also furniture and pictures, and most of them collected or inherited by Joshua Francis Fisher, first owner of Alvethorpe. The "Alve" is a little stream on the place. Planting of trees and shrubs also considered fine.

History - Since there is little history connected with Alvethorpe, it may be interesting to give an outline history of its architect, John Notman, who was for many years one of the leaders of the profession in Philadelphia.

"John Notman was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, July 22nd, 1810 and died in Philadelphia on March 3d, 1865. He appears first in the Philadelphia City Directory in 1837 as "Carpenter, Currant Alley,

House 184 South 11th Street," - the first building he designed in this country was the Episcopal Residence at Burlington, New Jersey erected in 1837, and the following year he designed and erected the Chapel of the Holy Innocents also in Burlington.

By 1840 he appeared in the Philadelphia Directory as "Architect" having attained a reputation from his Burlington buildings and from the Academy of Science in Philadelphia.

He first introduced the brownstone faades, later so typical in Philadelphia, in 1845. Best known as a Church Architect, he also designed many large residences. Among his work the following should be noted:-

- The Athenaeum (Library), 6th Street South of Walnut Street, Philadelphia
- St. Marks Episcopal Church on Locust Street Philadelphia
- St. Clement's Episcopal Church, 20th and Cherry Streets, Philadelphia
- Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia
- Facade of Catholic Cathedral, Logan Square, Philadelphia
- The Mercantile Library, Philadelphia
- St. Peter's Church, Pittsburgh
- St. Paul's Church, Trenton, N. J.
- St. Bartholomew's Church, New York
- New Jersey State Capitol, Trenton, N. J.
- New Jersey State Prison, Trenton, N. J.
- St. John's Church, Wilmington, Delaware
- Henry C. Gibson, Philadelphia - residence
- H. Pratt McKean House, Germantown "
- Ingersoll House, Philadelphia
- Joseph Peace, Burlington, N. J. "
- Alvethorpe, Jenkintown, Pa. (~~about to be demolished~~)
- Gustavus Myers House, Richmond, Va.
- J. P. Cushing House, Watertown, Conn.
- William H. Rogers, house - Wilmington, Del.
- Robert Iredell House, Norristown, Penna.

Most of his Churches are still standing and St. Mark's, St. Clement's and Holy Trinity are really fine pieces of Gothic architecture.

Notman was said to be an immoderate drinker, - in

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fact a one-bottle man, as it was said of him  
that he could finish a bottle of brandy at a  
sitting."

Bibliography - Joseph Jackson's "Early Philadelphia  
Architects and Engineers".

August 24th, 1937

*Joseph P. Sims*

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Joseph P. Sims, A.I.A.  
District Officer

TWJ 9/5/37